GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:44
ANSWERED ON:27.07.2005
SETHUSAMUDRAM PROJECT
Kharventhan Shri Salarapatty Kuppusamy;Krishnadas Shri N.N.

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain environmental organisations have expressed concern regarding the Sethusamudram Project undertaken by the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government has made any ecological study regarding the far-reaching consequences of this project;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 44 TO BE ANSWERED ON 27TH JULY, 2005 RAISED BY SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS & SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN REGARDING `SETHUSAMUDRAM PROJECT`.

(a) Yes, Sir. (b) The concerns expressed by environmentalists etc. inter-alia include damage to marine ecology, marine flora and fauna, coral reefs, adverse effects on fish breeding and fish catching. While formulating the project, adequate care has been taken to ensure that adverse impact on environment is minimal. Two rounds of public hearing were also conducted as a part of the process for obtaining environmental clearance for this project where concerns raised by fishermen representatives and Non-Governmental Organisations were noted. These concerns along with the response of project authorities were considered by the Ministry of Environment & Forests while granting environmental clearance to the project. The conditions attached with the environmental clearance inter-alia enjoin upon project authority to monitor marine environment quality periodically and take all necessary measures to protect the bio-diversity including endangered species of mangroves, corals, mammals.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment Study has been undertaken by the National Environment Engineering & Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur. The NEERI studied all the environment issues including ecological study, in depth, over a period of two years. The dredged area proposed is minimal when compared to vast Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay areas. To that extent, the alignment chosen presents no ecological concerns on destruction of micro-organisms/bottom flora and fauna of seabed.

(e) Does not arise.